



GREATER CHATTANOOGA
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

April 1, 2022

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Greater Chattanooga Economic Partnership and the 16-counties we support, I am writing to communicate my support for the City of Chattanooga as they pursue a grant through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant funding. The City of Chattanooga is pursuing this grant to replace the 70-year old Wilcox Boulevard Bridge over the DeButts Railyard, owned and operated by Norfolk Southern Railway, and over additional tracks operated by CSX Railway. The existing structure can no longer support freight trucks or emergency vehicles, does not offer a safe passageway for pedestrians or bicyclists to cross this large rail facility, and continues to rapidly deteriorate.

A replacement structure is vital to the community and to the transportation network and employers in this part of Chattanooga. The bridge provides access to one of our region's major commercial corridors with dozens of employers which support thousands of jobs. Some of these employers include Coca Cola, Fillauer prosthetics, BASF, Nippon Paint, Woodbridge, Southern Champion Tray and LJT Steel Warehouse. Many of their employees live in the East Chattanooga neighborhood which is connected to the Amnicola corridor by the Wilcox Boulevard Bridge and is one of the region's most economically challenged neighborhoods. Replacing the Wilcox bridge will help maintain the connectivity and employment of the residents of East Chattanooga.

Thank you for considering this project by the City of Chattanooga for a RAISE grant. In addition to addressing the transportation need, funding this project will have a direct impact on maintaining and growing employment in the region as well as economic mobility for the residents of the Chattanooga region.

Sincerely,

Charles Wood, CEcD
Chief Economic Development Officer

